

under HHS guidelines, but who are not disabled, could have their medical costs of their cancer treatment paid by the Federal government.

Workers who have a work related cancer, as established under the HHS guidelines, and who are disabled or dead, could also receive lost wage benefits, in addition to medical costs.

*Silicosis:* Miners at the Nevada Test site drilled underground tunnels through hard rock for the placement of nuclear weapons devices that were subsequently tested. DOE failed to adequately control exposure to silica dust and 20 percent of the workers screened by a DOE medical screening program at the Nevada Test Site have found silicosis, a disease that causes irreparable scarring of the lungs.

*Workers with Non-Existent Radiation Records.* Many worker dose records in DOE are flawed, but this amendment requires HHS to estimate dose, where records exist and it is feasible to do so. In some cases, though, it is not feasible to reconstruct what radiation dose a group of workers received, even though it is clear from their job types that their health may have been endangered by radiation. For these special exposure situations, the bill provides that workers can be placed by the HHS into a "special exposure cohort" that can be compensated for certain types of cancer enumerated in the amendment. Members of the "special exposure cohort" are eligible for the same compensation as workers in the previous section. Because of the unmeasured, probably large, internal radiation doses which they received, and the lack of monitoring, protection, or even warning given by DOE to them, certain employees at the DOE gaseous diffusion plants are placed in the "special exposure cohort" by law under the bill. It was the public outcry over the deliberate deception of these employees by the DOE and its contractors concerning workplace radiation risks that led the Administration to propose the bill on which Title 35 and this bill are patterned.

*Lump Sum Payment Option.* All of the above classes of workers, if they are disabled, and their survivors, if the workers die before being compensated, would be able to choose a one-time \$200,000 lump plus medical benefits in lieu of lost wages and ongoing medical benefits described above. This option is intended mostly for elderly, retired workers, or for survivors of deceased workers.

*Administrative Provisions.* There are provisions in the bill against receiving lost wages or lump sum payments for more than one disability or cause of death. Benefits under other Federal or state worker compensation statutes for the same disability or death would be deducted from any benefits under the bill. Title 35 and the bill also contain language making payment under the amendment the exclusive remedy for all liability by DOE and its contractors. For vendors, acceptance of payment under this program would waive the right to sue, but employees who seek court relief would have to file within 180 days of the onset of a beryllium or radiation related disease.

*Other Toxic Substances:* The bill does not provide federal compensation for health effects from exposure to other toxic substances in the DOE workplace, but does authorize DOE to work with States to get workers with these health effects into State worker compensation programs. DOE will maintain an office to review claims and advise contractors not challenge claims deemed meritorious by DOE.

## THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO CREATE AN ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

**HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2000

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I am today introducing legislation to establish the Administrative Law Conference of the United States.

America's administrative law judges occupy an important place in American government, adjudicating federal agency decisions that affect nearly every American. Administrative Law judges conduct formal proceedings, interpret federal and state law, apply agency regulations, and ensure the fair implementation of a broad range of federal agency policies. Since passage of the Administrative Procedure Act, the importance of administrative law judges and their impact on everyday life has steadily grown in conjunction with the increased scope and significance of modern regulation.

Today, administrative law judges annually handle thousands of cases with economy, dispatch and uncommon professionalism. The creation of an Administrative Law Judge Conference will bring further economy and efficiency to the administrative legal process. It will do so by enhancing the judicial performance, status and legal training of administrative law judges by establishing recurrent education programs that will sharpen the legal focus of administrative law judges while enhancing understanding of broader administrative adjudicatory trends. The Conference will not be the sole repository of this knowledge, however. Rather, the bill requires the Conference to annually submit its findings to Congress, where representatives of the American people can review the findings of the Conference and formulate policy to ensure the optimal function of the administrative legal process.

The creation of an Administrative Law Judge Conference will bring an increased measure of uniformity and efficiency to federal agency adjudication, enhance the status and performance of administrative law judges, and promote public confidence in the administrative legal process.

I urge your support of the bill.

## 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS

**HON. RICHARD E. NEAL**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2000

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, 40 years ago today President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed legislation into law that established real estate investment trusts, also known as REITs.

A REIT is a company dedicated to owning and, typically, operating income-producing real estate such as apartments, shopping centers,

offices and warehouses. The key feature of a REIT is the requirement that it pass 95 percent of its taxable income to its shareholders every year, which also means that it needs to grow primarily by raising investment funds in the capital markets.

Congress established REITs in 1960 to make it easier for small investors to invest in commercial properties, much like mutual funds allow small investors to pool funds. And as hoped, REITs have every reason to be proud of their record of professional management, and their history of bringing liquidity, security, and performance to average investors in commercial real estate. REITs currently hold about \$325 billion of assets, and this year have averaged a total return of 22.5 percent and averaged a dividend yield of 7.3 percent.

While REITs have played an important role in American economic life since 1960, they have truly come into their own since passage of the 1986 Tax Reform Act which removed most of the tax-sheltering capability of real estate and emphasized income producing transactions, and allowed REITs to operate and manage real estate as well as own it. This merged owner interests with the interests of other significant parties, leading to greater confidence in this form of investment. The adoption of the REIT Modernization Act by this Congress, a bill I cosponsored and worked for, will continue the trend toward allowing REITs to remain competitive and flexible in today's marketplace.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the REIT industry on their 40 years of leadership in the economic marketplace, and their national association for their effective leadership on federal and state issues important to the industry. I look forward to continuing to work with them on issues of importance to REIT investors.

## CONGRATULATING THE WATKINS MILL HIGH SCHOOL BOOSTER CLUB

**HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2000

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, today I honor and congratulate the students, parents, and faculty of Watkins Mill High School. I would like to especially acknowledge The Watkins Mill Booster Club, a group of devoted parents and community members who have formed a partnership to support and enrich all extra-curricular activities at the school. Their generous efforts benefit the school's athletics, academic programs, performing arts, and other activities.

The teachers and students at Watkins Mill are dedicated to excellence and committed to success. As Chair of the House Technology Subcommittee, I am especially proud of the medical careers magnet program at Watkins Mill High School. This education program has been recognized nationally for its integration of high technology in the classroom. In addition, the athletics programs at Watkins Mill benefit from the work of the Booster Club, including the division champion girls soccer team, the

unbeaten girls volleyball team, and the Maryland State 4A Champion baseball team.

This weekend, the Watkins Mill Booster Club is sponsoring a fundraiser which features the hilarious entertainment of The Capitol Steps, the nationally recognized musical political satire troupe. As the performers say, they are the "only group in America that attempts to be funnier than Congress." This Watkins Mill High School fundraising performance will be the only appearance by the Capitol Steps in Montgomery County, Maryland this year. I congratulate Booster Club member Heath Suddleson for arranging this event.

As a former educator, I am proud to recognize Watkins Mill High School for its extraordinary educational and extracurricular programs. I congratulate the school's students, faculty, supportive parents, dedicated administrators, and the Booster Club. In addition, I thank Principal MaryAnn Jobe, Booster Club President Paul Chewning, and Vice President Marge Goergen for their commitment. I wish Watkins Mill High School continued success in achieving excellence in education.

CONGRATULATING THE PEOPLE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON  
THEIR NATIONAL DAY, OCTOBER  
10, 2000

**HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD**

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 14, 2000*

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, as we may recall, the island of Taiwan was hit by a devastating earthquake last year on September 21. Thousands lost their lives and damage costs ran into the hundreds of millions. In what was already becoming troubling economic times, that prospering island nation was nearly brought to its knees. We who are Taiwan's regional neighbors know that, prior to the earthquake, the people of Taiwan were getting ready to celebrate their most important public holiday on October 10th affectionately known as "10-10," Taiwan's National Day is celebrated with the same sense of loyalty and patriotism, the same sense of pride, and with the same gusto as we celebrate our most important public holiday, the Fourth of July. Imagine then how pained, how joyless and how sad the people of Taiwan must have been to find themselves in the midst of overwhelming tragedy instead of joyous celebration.

A year has passed, and like the rest of the world, the Republic of China has stepped into the 21st century. Their recovery from the earthquake has been slow and steady, and some signs of the devastation still remain. Reconstruction and rebuilding of their economy is progressing so that now they can mark the anniversary of earthquake with solemnity and yet prepare to celebrate "10-10" with renewed hope and with renewed confidence in themselves.

We in Guam know all too well how important "10-10" is to the people of Taiwan, because the Taiwan Chinese community of Guam has always been generous in their celebrations, inviting our participation and sharing

all the good things that make us brothers, sisters and cousins of the Pacific. Their contributions to Guam are immense, yet they remain humble and hardworking, and they go about their lives quietly helping to build our economy, enhancing our pool of professional skill and talent, and enriching our island community. We, who are no strangers to natural disasters, mourned with the people of Taiwan last year. This year, we, who know what it is like to reject defeat and to work hard toward full recovery, look forward with them to a joyful celebration.

Mr. Speaker, this October 10th the Republic of China will celebrate its 89th anniversary as a free and prosperous democracy. I think the earthquake in Taiwan pointed out the real success story that is Taiwan—that their relationships with people throughout the world are so good that so many came to their aid. Nothing is as serious a sign of our common humanity than when we are most vulnerable, and certainly times of natural disaster point that out. And I think it is very important that we continue to express our support for Taiwan.

At its essence, "10-10" is a celebration of the amazing successes people can achieve when they are free to exercise their rights, when they can aspire to greater things, when they can pursue what they desire for themselves, their families and their nation, when they refuse to be defeated. The Republic of China's continuing triumph is an inspiration to all freedom-loving people around the world. For this, we thank them. On this year's commemoration of "10-10," we congratulate them.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 14, 2000*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, during the week of July 24th, due to hospitalization, I was unable to vote on Roll Call Number 429 through and including Roll Call number 450. If I had been present I would have voted AYE on all, except on Roll Call Number 449, on which I would have voted NAY. Accordingly, I ask unanimous consent to have my statement placed in the RECORD at the appropriate point.

RECOGNIZING EDWARD J. BRISCOE  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**HON. KAY GRANGER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 14, 2000*

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize and commend Edward J. Briscoe Elementary School of Fort Worth, Texas, for being designated by the Texas Education Agency as a State of Texas Recognized School. This tremendous achievement is a testament to the leadership of Briscoe Elementary's principal, Dr. Jennifer Giddings Brooks, and to the hard work of the school's teachers, staff, and students.

The students attending Briscoe Elementary come from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The

school is located in a neighborhood with challenging social conditions, where 97% students are on free and reduced lunch programs. With the guidance of dedicated teachers, students at Briscoe have overcome these disadvantages and become an example of academic achievement for all of America's schools.

Over the last several years, test scores have drastically risen at Briscoe Elementary. More than 80% of the school's 410 students passed each section of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test. What is even more impressive is Briscoe's attendance rate of 96.5%. This success is a result of the incredible devotion to students by the school's teachers and staff. They set high standards for their students, but they also invest real time in their students' lives. Fourthgrade teacher Shaneeka Shannon says that her work at Briscoe Elementary is "Not just a job. It's a calling." Shaneeka's attitude is at the core of the school's success. By believing in and setting high expectations for its students, Briscoe has beaten the odds and become a place where academic excellence is the rule not the exception.

As a former public school teacher, I am very concerned about the condition of America's classrooms; however, the success of schools like Briscoe Elementary give me hope and should give our nation hope. Together we can reach our vision of an America where our children are not only well-educated; but, more importantly, an America where our children believe in themselves and their country.

We can reach this goal one school and one child at a time. Briscoe Elementary School's success will serve as an excellent example of what can be accomplished.

VETERINARY HEALTH ENHANCEMENT  
ACT FOR UNDER-SERVED  
AREAS

**HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 14, 2000*

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, many rural and inner city areas of the United States lack proper veterinary care in their communities. As a result, the health of both animals and humans in these areas is at risk. In many cases, veterinarians, upon graduating from a school of veterinary medicine, opt to practice in a prosperous urban setting which provides the highest opportunity for income. This leaves many rural and inner-city regions lacking proper veterinary care.

Rural areas in the United States are going through a unique transformation. These smalltown, agrarian communities are literally drying up. These areas can't afford to provide veterinarians the same levels of income as a more prosperous urban area. Therefore, these areas are forced to go without a practicing veterinarian in the area. Not only do families need pet health care in these areas, but farmers and ranchers are forced to conduct their operations without an agricultural veterinarian in the area resulting in the poor health of livestock and humans as well as loss of income to the farmer or rancher. In the same respect,